

Introduction to the Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM)

Paul Lodge, University of Oxford

- In 2012
 - A pilot led by the University of Reading with support from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) considered the application of Athena SWAN to arts, humanities and social sciences.
 - From this pilot GEM was born.

What is Athena SWAN?



Charter for women in science
Recognising commitment to advancing
women's careers in STEMM academia

Athena SWAN Charter evolved from work between the Athena Project and the Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN), to advance the representation of women in science, technology, engineering, medicine and mathematics (STEMM).

Supported by ECU, it was launched in 2005, with the first awards conferred in 2006.

Over half of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) active in STEMM subject areas are now members.

How Athena SWAN works

- The Athena SWAN Charter is based around six principles:
 - 1. To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation.
 - 2. To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation.
 - 3. The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine.
 - 4. The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address.

- 5. The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises.
- 6. There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in science, which require the active consideration of the organisation.

- To join the Charter HEIs must indicate that their institution will take action to address these areas.
- Once signed up, HEIs are expected to apply for an Institutional Athena SWAN award within 3 years.
- Depts. can also apply for Athena SWAN awards.

- Awards are achieved by submitting an application which accords with a standard template that is based around the six principles.
- There are three levels of award available - Gold, Silver or Bronze - depending on level and sustainment of engagement.
 - NOTE: Submission of an application is not a guarantee of success.

From Athena SWAN to GEM

- In 2013 ECU:
 - Consulted the HE sector to test interest in the development of GEM (120 responses with 71% likely or very likely to apply);
 - established the Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM), with a view to merging it with Athena SWAN in several years time;
 - invited HEIs to apply to participate in a trial of GEM (at institutional & ‘departmental’ levels);
 - selected 36 departments and 10 institutions for the trial (including Oxford & Cambridge philosophy).

- In 2014:
 - Trial participants will submit applications for the GEM to the ECU by 30 April and receive awards in July/August;
 - GEM will be formally launched (hopefully in October) and available to all HEIs.

Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM)

- GEM is the equivalent of the Athena SWAN award for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Awards of the GEM will work in essentially the same way as Athena SWAN.
 - However, there is no direct equivalent of the Athena SWAN charter (presumably to be built in at the stage where the schemes merge?).

The GEM Principles

- These differ slightly from Athena SWAN.
 - There is no AS 4 equivalent (others match as indicated).
 - A) To address gender inequalities, commitment and action at all levels of the organisation is required; (AS 1)
 - B) the absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine; (AS 3)
 - C) that employment policies, practices and procedures should actively promote gender equality;

- D) there are personal and structural obstacles to making the transition from undergraduate level to PhD and then into senior academic positions and managerial levels, which require the active consideration of the organisation; (AS 6)
- E) to tackle unequal representation of women or men requires changing cultures and attitudes (within the department) and across the organisation; (AS 2)
- F) the system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of female academics; (AS 5)
- G) a broad range of work activity undertaken by staff is recognised in their career progression and promotion;

- **Institution level submission only**
 - H) to tackle the unfair treatment often experienced by trans people requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation.
- NOTE: Setting aside the important movement in the direction of recognizing issues that are encountered by trans people, arguably G) represents the most significant change in approach.

To receive an award

- Depts. or Institutions must submit an Athena SWAN-like application demonstrating their commitment to each of these principles.
 - This is demonstrated by the submission itself, but also by the level of commitment shown by Heads of Dept. and the diversity of representation on the Self-Assessment Committee that must be formed to produce the submission.

- The form of the application is dictated by the award template.
- From now on we'll consider only the dept. version.

The award template

- The template has two key components:
- 1) Data template
 - The starting point for understanding the current position of the department
- 2) Analysis and action planning template
 - 1. Allows for description of the position of the department in relation to gender equality
 - 2. Requires completion an action template to outline future work linked to what the evidence shows

1. Data template

- Submissions must include a number of tables (21 in the pilot for depts.) showing gender balances in various domains.
- Applicants are required to provide data covering a three-year period wherever requested or explain why data is unavailable or incomplete.
- The data requested is in line with Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) returns.

- **Examples of tables:**

- 1. Students on degree courses
- 2. Student degree outcomes
- 3. Student application to offer ratios
- 4. Staff recruitment
- 5. Academic staff at different pay grades
- 6. REF submission
- 7. Representation on decision-making committees
- 8. Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leave requests and return rates
 - (NOTE: in the Oxford trial we have looked to recover more than 3 years of data where possible)

2. Analysis and action planning template

- The analysis template is divided into sections in accordance with the principles.
- Each section consists of a series of questions, which are to be answered in light of reflection on current practice and relevant data.
- Sometimes specific data are requested that are derived from the data template.

Analysis (an example)

- Principle B)
 - The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the institution will examine.
- Data required - ratio of men to women in:
 - Dept. 'senior management team'
 - Academic teaching and learning committees
 - Research committee (or equivalent)

Questions to be answered:

- 1. How does line management work in the department? How are line managers chosen, do the roles rotate?
- 2. What is the department doing to address gender imbalance on committees? What success/progress has been made?
- 3. Where there is an imbalance, what is the department doing to ensure a broad range of views are heard?
- 4. How is consideration for gender equality embedded in the thinking and processes of committees and their related structures and procedures?
- 5. What training and induction is provided to committee members and those with decision-making powers?

Action planning

- Takes a form typical for strategic planning – i.e., provision of a table with the following headings:
 - Objective
 - Rationale
 - Action already taken and outcome
 - Further action planned
 - Timeframe
 - Person responsible
 - Target outcome – where possible include tangible measure of success



- There are no requirements regarding particular actions, however the GEM handbook includes the following:
 - “failure to recognise issues fundamental to career progression will be looked upon negatively”
- and recommends looking at:
 - Athena SWAN good practice case studies
www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/good-practice
 - Athena SWAN factsheets
www.athenaswan.org.uk/content/factsheets

The judging process

- Submissions will be judged by a panel comprising:
 - Academics from the relevant fields
 - Equality and diversity practitioners
 - Human resources staff

Possible outcomes from a panel

- Award conferred
- Award conferred at a lower level
- Request for additional information
 - (Dept. has two weeks to respond)
- No award conferred

GEM award levels

Bronze:

- Has identified particular challenges and has planned activities for next 3 years.

Silver:

- Demonstrates significant record of activity and achievement for the past three years.

Gold:

- Demonstrates significant sustained progression over five years and are beacons of achievement in gender equality.

GEM in practice

- At a meeting with the ECU in Sept. for those participating in the trial the following workflow was offered:
 - 1. Establish self assessment team.
 - 2. Use the UK Resource Centre (UKRC) cultural analysis tool.
 - 3. Identify the data you have available – make contact with staff in your institution who hold and manage data.
 - 4. Populate data templates.
 - 5. Analyse data from template and other relevant sources to identify issues.
 - 6. Identify measures in place – are they effective?
 - 7. Identify what further measure are necessary.
 - 8. Make your submission to the ECU Gender Team.

Postscript

- Whilst it is hoped that the GEM will appeal to depts. for other reasons, the following are worth bearing in mind:
 - In 2011, the Chief Medical Officer announced that the National Institute for Health Research would only expect to shortlist medical schools for biomedical research centre and unit funding if the school holds a Silver Athena SWAN award
 - In January 2013 Research Councils UK (RCUK) launched its 'Statement of Expectations for Equality and Diversity', which states that it expects those in receipt of Research Council funding to "provide evidence of ways in which equality and diversity issues are managed at both an institutional and department level". It recommends that the evidence includes participation in schemes such as Athena SWAN

Web resources

Athena SWAN:

www.athenaswan.org.uk

RCUK statement of Expectation for Equality and Diversity:

www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/EqualityStatement.pdf

ECU (with full details of GEM)

www.ecu/ac.uk